

REMARKS

With the cancellation herein without prejudice of claim 12, claims 13 to 25 are pending in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for immediate allowance, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicants note with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter included in claims 16 to 20 and 25. In this regard, the Examiner will note that claims 16 and 25 have been rewritten herein in independent form. As such, it is respectfully submitted that claims 16 and 25, as well as claims 17 to 20, which ultimately depend from claim 16, are in condition for immediate allowance.

Furthermore, claims 13 to 15 and 21 to 24 now depend from claim 16. As such, it is respectfully submitted that these claims are also in condition for immediate allowance.

Regarding the rejections raised under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(e) and 103(a), while Applicants do not necessarily agree with the merits of these rejections, to facilitate matters, claim 12 has been canceled herein without prejudice, and claims 13 to 15 and 21 to 24 have been amended herein without prejudice to depend from claim 16, which was indicated to include allowable subject matter. As such, it is respectfully submitted that these rejections are moot, and withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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